

Staying the Course



Friends of Wilderness Battlefield

Zann Nelson



The secret of getting ahead is
getting started

-Mark Twain

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield

FoWB

- ❖ Founded in 1995 by a few community-minded neighbors who saw a need to assist the National Park Service in “taking care” of the Wilderness Battlefield.
- ❖ Those kitchen table discussions resulted in a Mission Statement, a Statement of Purpose, a set of Bylaws, a Charter and the first Board of Directors.
- ❖ It may seem like overkill for a group who were pledged simply to **PERFORM MAINTENANCE TASKS**, but they were indeed visionaries and laid the foundation for growth and long-term viability.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB) is to assist the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FRSP) in its efforts to preserve the Wilderness Battlefield in Spotsylvania and Orange Counties. The Friends provide advocacy, educational programs, and service projects for the battlefield.

Lessons Learned....

- ✓ **ASSESS, ASSESS, ASSESS** (before you begin): what are the needs; who are the potential partners; what do you have to offer?
- ✓ **USE TEMPLATES**...most founding documents are boiler plate...do not waste time reinventing the wheel...but
- ✓ **BE VERY DELIBERATE** about the **MISSION STATEMENT**
- ✓ **DEVELOP** a set of **GOALS**: “How” you will achieve the Mission.
- ✓ **DEVELOP** the **GUIDING PRINCIPALS**, sometimes referred to as a Code of Ethics

GOALS HIGHLIGHTED and ABBREVIATED

1. To provide advocacy, educational programs, and service projects for the National Park Service with specific emphasis on the Wilderness Battlefield and to aid other as yet unprotected battlefield areas.
2. To promote for the benefit of the general public, the preservation, protection, and interpretation
3. To increase community appreciation, understanding and use of the natural and historic environment
4. To conduct, sponsor or facilitate educational activities
5. To apply for and administer grants and other donations relating to the purposes of the.....
6. To support and assist organizations that are organized for purposes that are in line with those of FoWB...

We Started Small.....



and Kept on Growing.....



Then the Plans Changed...

FoWB was no longer just about
battlefield maintenance and

not everyone was thrilled
by the change.

Opening and Restoring Ellwood Manor

Gen. G.K. Warren's Hdqrs.
during the May 1864
Battle of the Wilderness

became the **SUBJECT OF DEBATE**

The Question:

*Should FoWB's Focus be on
a House or the Battlefield?*

Review the Mission and Goals.

The majority of the Board of
Directors saw interlocking benefits
and determined that
both could be served
They chose to move forward with....

The Ellwood Manor Project

was expected to bring more attention and
visibility to the battlefield



Goal 1: Open the House to the public

Requirements.....

- ❖ **MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT** with the property owner, NPS
- ❖ **RECRUITMENT** of **NEW VOLUNTEERS** to serve as Docents
- ❖ **NPS TRAINING** for volunteer docents
- ❖ **RECRUITMENT** of **NEW Volunteers** to maintain the grounds
- ❖ **NPS TRAINING** for grounds maintenance crew
- ❖ **SCHEDULER**

Goal 2: Restoration of The Manor House



But don't be fooled by a pretty face!

.....it would be quite a challenge



Restoration Requirements

- ❖ A Fundraising Agreement with the property owner, the NPS
- ❖ A commitment to raising the necessary funds
- ❖ A dramatic shift in manpower and resources

Perseverance and Partnership Prevailed!



Lessons Learned

- ✓ Hire a Fundraising Director
- ✓ Require a signed commitment from each of the Board of Directors to engage in the Fundraising Campaign
- ✓ Respect and Act upon the need for Balance where opinions differ
- ✓ Be Patient with Partners
- ✓ Nurture the Team

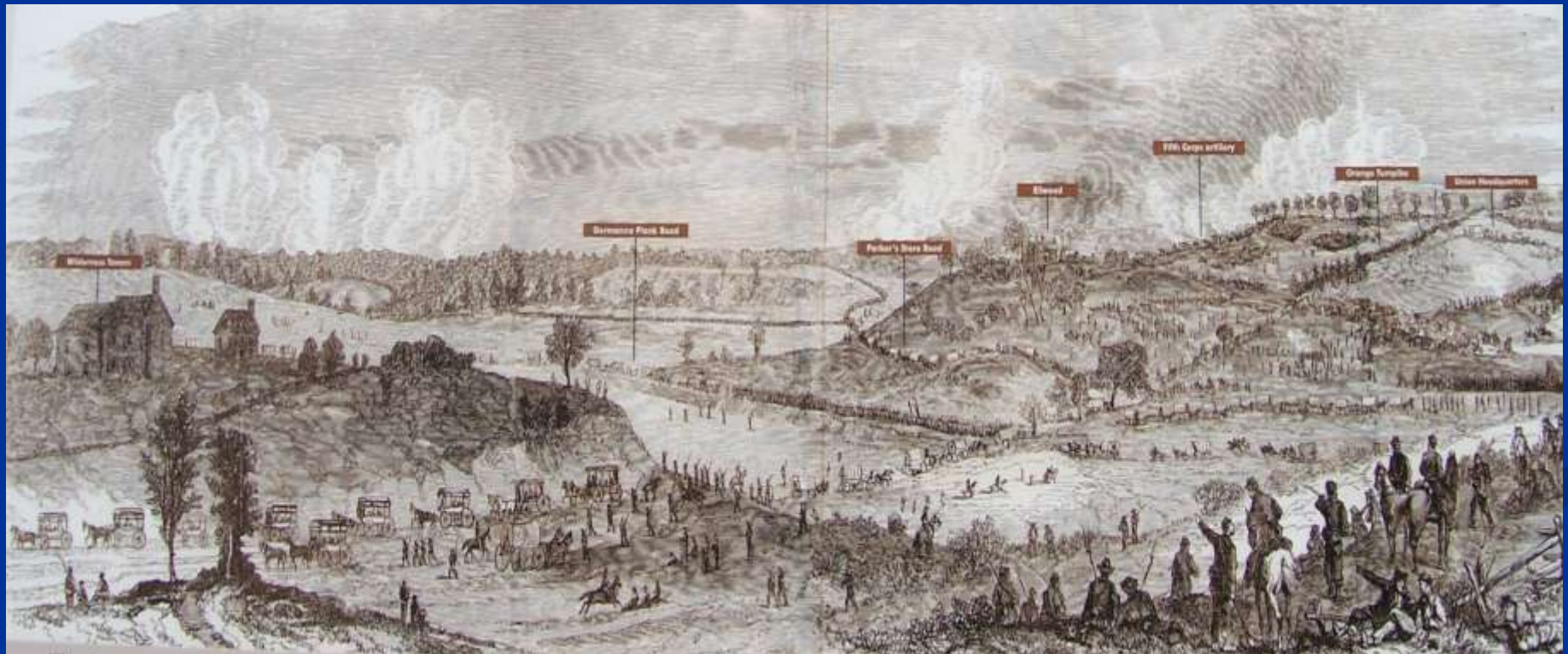
Many hands have added to the Visitors' Experience and Promoted Enlistments in the Army for Preservation



Just when we thought we could
breathe easy,
along came another
need for our Advocacy!



We deliberated the issue and
chose to fulfill our Mission to
Preserve and Protect.



Once again FoWB offered our
*grassroots resources in
alliance for preservation and
added our name to the
Wilderness Coalition.*

There were those who disagreed
and we lost “friends.”

.....then we lost a few more when
Walmart decided to relocate

The Preservationists Prevailed



But there was no time to waste and less for gloating.
Attention was immediately shifted to **REBUILDING**
those **ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY**
RELATIONSHIPS

The Wilderness Gateway Study
was launched ...

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield
took its place alongside the
Wilderness Coalition to mend fences
and collaborate with previous 'foes'
on developing a mutually agreeable
plan for the future of the area.

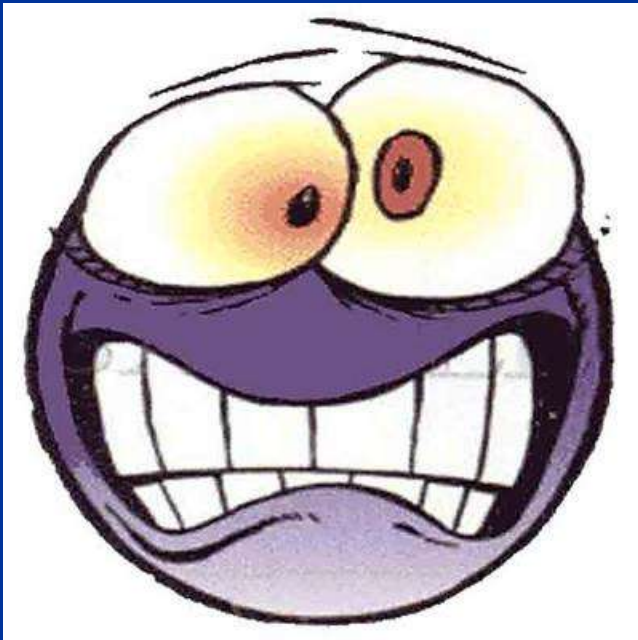
Lessons Learned

- ✓ No matter how noble the cause not everyone will take your part!
- ✓ Collaboration takes time, patience, and respect and is integral to the final outcome.
- ✓ One must look beyond the immediate battlefield and focus on the ultimate goal.
- ✓ Practice being a Gracious Player: Win or Lose as you may be needed on another day.

CHANGES and CHALLENGES

Are inevitable...

How you manage is up to you!



OR



They say that
“The only Real Constant
is Change” and so we should
expect it!

.....and Challenges?

One might suggest that
if you are not experiencing challenges
then you are not making a difference!

Yep, our boat sprang leaks, lots of them, but fortunately, she never looked like this !



It wasn't luck or reincarnation.

It was a lot of hard work and a
Special Tool that the non-profit
world
should never be without!

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- Developing Organizational Capacity is an investment in your future as a **SUSTAINABLE** nonprofit organization
- Improved Organizational Capacity serves as both **SWORD** and **SHIELD** When faced with inevitable challenges.

“Capacity building tools consist of whatever is needed to bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission.”

Must have Capacity Building Tools.....

1. A Code of Ethics that reflects the organization's Guiding Principles i.e. Transparency, Commitment, Collaboration, and Respect.

These will aid in selecting board members and encourage a Team Spirit.

2. Published Governance Policies, Practices and Guidelines that inform and bolster stability.

Must have Tools cont.....

3. Fundraising policies and procedures
(perhaps a training manual that
includes strategies and goals),
4. Financial Controls such as
Procurement and Reimbursement
policies and an
5. Annual Board Retreat

Other Capacity Building Tools

might include

- ✓ IT Development,
- ✓ Improving volunteer recruitment,
- ✓ Developing a leadership succession plan,
- ✓ Developing a fundraising plan and
- ✓ Developing an Outreach Plan to Collaborate with community partners

GREAT PROGRAMS REQUIRE GREAT ORGANIZATIONS

